

P-12: Tobacco Education with Incarcerated Youth

Venue: Schools

Goal: Preventing Initiation of Tobacco Use/Promote Cessation of Tobacco Use

Sponsoring Organization: ESD 114

Abstract: ESD 114 is responsible for delivering the education system for juvenile detention centers in Port Orchard and Port Angeles. ESD staff had observed that a high proportion of the incarcerated youth considered themselves to be smokers prior to their detention. In detention facilities, juveniles are not allowed to smoke and get to experience the “cold turkey” method of cessation. While they are in a forced state of cessation, ESD 114 is taking advantage of the opportunity to educate them about the dangers of tobacco, how the tobacco industry targets them and how they can stay quit and be involved in tobacco advocacy in their community. Future directions include increasing evaluation efforts to measure the prevalence of pre-incarceration tobacco use and changes in intention to remain tobacco-free after release.

Recommendations: Consider carefully the costs and benefits of working with this high-risk population. Involve people in the program who have experience working with incarcerated youth. Be flexible, prepared and positive. Health education delivered to these youth needs to be quite basic, not assuming much background knowledge about the risks of tobacco use.

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